

BLM Central California Resource Advisory Council
April 9-10, 2010
Bakersfield, CA
Meeting Notes

Attendees:

RAC: Steve Koretoff, Carl Twisselman, Reb Monaco, Mary Gorden, Jim Haagen-Smit, Suzanne Noble, Leigh Marymor, Roger Mitchell, Paul McFarland, Walt Pachucki.

BLM: Kathy Hardy, Central California District Manager; Tim Smith, Bakersfield Field Office Manager; George Hill, Hollister Field Office Associate Manager; Bill Haigh, Mother Lode Field Office Manager; Bernadette Lovato, Bishop Field Office Manager; Kelly Cole, Bakersfield Field Office Ranger; Gabe Garcia, Bakersfield Minerals Division Manager; Steve Larson, Resources Division Manager; Karen Montgomery, State Realty Specialist; David Christy, Central California District Public Affairs.

Public: Jim Gorden, Jill Monaco, Cathy Haagen-Smit, Marshall Havner, Rock and Gem Society; Amy Granat, California Off-Road Vehicle Association; Mike Damaso, Merced Off-Highway Vehicle Association.

9 a.m. start

STATE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Kathy Hardy gave the State Director's report:

- Acting State Director Jim Abbott sends his thanks to each of you for your service and contributions to BLM and the public lands.
- Keeping you informed and up to date is important -- so I'd like to pass along a few national and state highlights. I'd be glad to answer questions as well.

National/State Issues:

- **New Leadership** – We're a little over a year into this Administration and all our key positions in Washington are now filled. Until a new State Director is chosen, Jim Abbott will serve as Acting State Director.
- **2010 Budget** – We're halfway through FY 2010 and of course already thinking about 2011. The President's budget is out and looks good for BLM. President Obama has proposed \$1.1 billion for BLM in fiscal year 2011, an \$8 million increase over last year. Renewable energy, youth, treasured landscapes, and climate change initiatives are among the priorities. Special attention is given to the wild horse and burro program with a proposed \$12 million increase, to \$75.7 million for 2011. There is separate, but related land-acquisition funding request of \$42.5 million for the purchase of land for one wild horse preserve.

- **Legislation** – We are now in year two of the 111th Congress. The large Omnibus lands bill was passed last year, which, among other things, codified the National Landscape Conservation System. As for pending legislation, including one here in Central California, to acquire an historic Japanese-American site near Coloma called Wakamatsu.
- **State Priorities:** Our statewide priorities are very similar to the National priorities: 1) renewable energy, 2) the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, 3) Youth initiatives; and 3) the upcoming 10th Anniversary of the National Landscape Conservation System.
- **Renewables:** Statewide, we have more than 150 solar and wind applications, covering more than a million acres. In Central California, we have six wind applications, all in the testing stages.
- **ARRA or the Recovery Act or Stimulus** –BLM-California received \$40 million to fund 115 projects on public lands in California. Contracts have been or are going up for bid right now with the goal of creating or augmenting jobs by putting boots on the ground. These investments will restore landscapes and habitat, spur renewable energy development remediate abandoned mine lands; and build roads, bridges and trails.
- **The National Landscape Conservation System** is celebrating its 10th Anniversary in 2010. Several areas in Central California are part of the system including the Carrizo Plain National Monument, the Piedras Blancas Light Station Outstanding Natural Area and several wilderness and wilderness study areas. Events are planned throughout California to commemorate the anniversary.
- **Youth in the Great Outdoors** – Secretary Salazar is very committed to connecting our young people with the outdoors. This includes not only environmental education, but hiring youth to work on public lands and with Interior offices and personnel. His new "Youth in the Great Outdoors" unveiled last month sets goals for this effort.

LONE PINE SUBCOMMITTEE

Paul McFarland provided a presentation (ATTACHED) the Lone Pine Designations Subcommittee presented to Inyo County Supervisors on management of the Alabama Hills, including possible designation as a National Landscape Conservation System unit. He said the lone Pine group has created a “culture of stewardship.” Trash has been picked up and fire rings have been removed by volunteers. BLM employee David Kirk has involved the community and leads field trips to the Alabama Hills.

The subcommittee is looking at designations of a Natural Scenic Area or Outstanding Natural Area. A proposed name is the Alabama Hills Natural Scenic Area or American Film History.

Forty uses have been identified in the Alabama Hills. The Subcommittee has met with Inyo County Supervisors, who cautioned the legislation should contain strong language so the area will be managed as the subcommittee envisions. Subcommittee members also have contacted

staff for Senator Dianne Feinstein, who indicated they will defer to the community and support a designation when one is developed.

Walt Pachucki said he is impressed with the amount of work that has been done and the way diverse interests have been involved. He believes it is one of the best politically organized efforts in the Eastern Sierras.

RAC members agreed to defer to the work by the community and take no formal action at this time.

Bernadette Lovato said BLM and subcommittee members have been taking county supervisors on field trips to show them uses such as rock climbing. Supervisors understand their constituents and the subcommittee has developed a good relationship with the supervisors.

Walt Pachucki said groups typically have gotten together to support a designation for an area. In this case, the group looked at how the area should be managed and if a designation is appropriate.

Paul McFarland said he hopes there won't be problems when the issue goes to the national level; interest groups will continue to defer to the local community. Unlike Piedras Blancas, historically there have been problems in the Alabama Hills.

OHV SUBCOMMITTEE

Steve Koretoff, Subcommittee Chair, presented the revised OHV Planning Criteria (ATTACHED). The document was revised based on comments at the September 2009 RAC meeting in Cambria. Reb Monaco moved and Roger Mitchell seconded a motion to refer the criteria to the full RAC. Motion passed.

Reb Monaco said the criteria can serve as an evaluation tool. Steve Koretoff said it is a template to review potential OHV areas to avoid wasting time on areas that wouldn't qualify or be suitable for OHV use.

Paul McFarland said the criteria should include language on management practices to control the spread of invasive weeds.

George Hill said that would be covered in the environmental analysis.

Steve Koretoff moved and Roger Mitchell seconded a motion for the RAC to approve the criteria. Motion passed.

Leigh Marymor asked what the next step would be. Steve Koretoff said OHV groups could suggest potential areas. The OHV Subcommittee and BLM could use the criteria as a review tool. He expects any new area would involve multiple agencies. He hopes to identify a project that would meet the criteria and be acceptable to the various stakeholders.

Leigh Marymor asked if the field offices have a similar process. George Hill said BLM Hollister has met with state OHV Division staff and looked at potential use at Williams Hill and Juniper Ridge. Juniper Ridge totals 30,000 acres in two parcels separated by about 80 acres of private land. The area does not have T&E species or serpentine rock.

MEETING NOTES

Reb Monaco moved and Carl Twisselman seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the September 11-12, 2009, meeting. Motion passed.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be Sept. 17-18, to be hosted by Hollister. The agenda will include a presentation on Juniper Ridge and Williams Hill. Handouts for the meeting will be posted on the web about a week before the meeting. Election of officers will be discussed including the length of terms.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Tim Smith said the Piedras Blancas Light Station volunteers won a Making a Difference Award (ATTACHED).

Paul McFarland asked how BLM calculated the value of volunteer contributions – skilled versus unskilled work. Jim Haagen-Smit said tracking the different jobs would also increase the complexity of reporting volunteer contributions.

Carl Twisselman asked if volunteer activity influenced BLM funding. Steve Koretoff said he would like to see areas with extensive volunteer activity get additional funding.

Tim Smith said his goal for Piedras Blancas is be self sustaining so it is not dependent on appropriations.

At Keyesville, BLM has about six volunteers. The area has had problems in the past and it is one of the areas of emphasis in the Bakersfield Resource Management Plan.

The San Joaquin River Gorge has a large volunteer program with activities focused on trail work, school visits and environmental education.

Carrizo Plain National Monument also has a large volunteer program and Friends of the Carrizo have a major role in the National Landscape Conservation System celebration. One volunteer, Craig Deutsch, has personally put in about 800 hours and organized groups to put in thousands of hours of volunteer work. He used a GPS unit to map roads for the Carrizo RMP process in addition to a variety of other work.

Jim Boucher, the Piedras manager, holds regular recognition dinners for volunteers. Johna Hurl, Carrizo manager, attends Friends meetings and also recognizes volunteers.

Jim Haagen-Smit asked if BLM tracks the amount of time BLM managers spend working with volunteers and how could the number of volunteers increase in more places.

Tim Smith said the manager plays a key role in encouraging volunteers. Peter DeWitt, the BLM Bakersfield recreation planner, spends at least one day a week at Keyesville working with volunteers and Tracy Rowland, the San Joaquin Gorge manager, spends a significant portion of time with volunteers.

Jim Haagen-Smit said it appears BLM supplies the material and volunteers do the labor, so BLM's role is managing the team.

Bill Haigh said for BLM Mother Lode there are active volunteer programs at the Cosumnes River Preserve and Pine Hill Preserve. BLM has worked with partners at the Cosumnes since the 1990s and the Cosumnes Facebook page has 900 friends.

Pine Hill also has an active group of volunteers who pick up trash and do other work. There are other volunteer groups around the field office area such as the American River Conservancy and Merced Watershed Council. Lee Creek, a volunteer, is gathering history of the field office area. Barbara Williams, the volunteer coordinator, has retired from the job and Jeff Horn, BLM recreation planner, has the lead. BLM has two students who are working as volunteers, one at Pine Hill and one at Cosumnes.

BLM also has volunteers in the fuels program. Jerry Martinez, the new fire management officer, has had volunteers working on fuel breaks at Pine Hill and other projects.

George Hill said for BLM Hollister, volunteers at Fort Ord are planting native species. An elementary school in the area is growing native plants and planting them. Fort Ord has had 3,000 volunteers doing work valued at \$400,000.

Volunteers, including students from local schools, have done paleo work and are processing a hydrosaur fossil for display in a museum. They also have found plant fossils including a redwood fossil 4 feet in diameter and about 80 feet long.

Bernadette Lovato said BLM Bishop has a variety of volunteer projects. One volunteer at the travertine hot tubs cleans the bathrooms and removes fire rings. The Bridgeport Tribe is interested in archaeological site stewardship. Friends of the Inyo monitor the volcanic tablelands at the Fish Slough Area of Critical Environmental concern. She is interested in a more active volunteer program and is looking at the ambassador program at Glacier National Park as a model.

Marine from the training base have cleaned some areas in the north end of the field office and clean ups are a major part of the volunteer programs at the Alabama Hills and Chalfant.

At Chalfant, 42 people turned out, including youth groups and families, and completed a clean up project in 1 ½ hours.

Carl Twisselman said he is impressed by the number of volunteers doing projects for BLM. BLM seems able to avoid some legal problems faced by other agencies.

Tim Smith said BLM land is mixed with land owned by private parties or other agencies, which requires the parties to work together. For example, OHV users, BLM and the City of Taft are cooperating on opportunities for OHV recreation.

Bill Haigh said BLM tends to be more de-centralized than some other agencies, with more authority delegated to field managers. BLM also has historically been underfunded, so managers look outside the agency to get work done.

Kathy Hardy said BLM field managers support volunteer programs and community involvement by their staff.

Bernadette Lovato said the focus of volunteer programs has been to get work done on the ground. BLM has been open to ideas as long as they don't conflict with the law. Karen Montgomery said BLM's multiple use mission has given it flexibility to work with volunteers.

Jim Haagen-Smit asked what impediments there are to volunteering; how to get the community involved if it's not.

Marshall Havner said he is involved in gems and minerals and there are a number of websites and newsletters on the topic. He is interested in getting more involved with BLM. BLM has been the most approachable agency, but many organizations and individuals aren't aware of opportunities, where they could put their energy.

Reb Monaco said volunteer projects need to be goal oriented so volunteers know exactly what they will be doing. Some areas that have historically ignored or mis-used will take more work to get volunteers involved.

Bill Haigh said volunteers like to work at special areas like Pine Hill Preserve. Volunteers promote the program on their own through social media like Facebook.

Tim Smith said he agreed with Reb Monaco. Keyesville needs work; in part due to a lack of attention in the past. Keyesville will be an area of emphasis in the new RMP.

Reb Monaco said he is impressed by the effort at the Alabama Hills. He had climbed Mount Whitney twice years ago and wasn't aware of the Alabama Hills,

Walt Pachucki said one of the keys to success of a volunteer project is to divide the job into tasks so volunteers can see they accomplished something at the end of the day. Work at the Chalk Bluffs and Alabama Hills was divided that way and volunteers returned to do more work.

Paul McFarland said it also needs to be a priority for BLM staff to work with volunteers since it takes time.

Bernadette Lovato said working with volunteers is part of the performance appraisal for recreation staff and she believes in recognizing staff efforts. BLM paid for lunch for volunteers at Chalfant and she bought lunch for the BLM staff.

Tim Smith said the performance appraisal for managers contains a section on collaboration, which includes the Oil and Gas Workgroup for the Minerals Division.

Steve Larson said volunteers take ownership of some areas. Volunteers have made long-term commitments to clean toilets and pick up trash in areas.

Amy Granat said she represents more than 120 clubs and has had a different experience in some cases. In some BLM offices, volunteers with motorized recreation are not welcome, which reduces volunteer contributions.

Marshall Havner said Friends of Jawbone had a crew of five willing to build fences near China Lake, but got stonewalled by the BLM ranger. Most OHV users obey the rules, but some don't and OHV organizations need to take some responsibility.

Carl Twisselman said he was previously anti-OHV but has softened his attitude after working on the RAC with OHV users. A lot of the public only sees the bad side of OHV use.

Jim Haagen-Smit asked what could be done to make the volunteer program more successful. Reb Monaco asked if there are best practices share to help the program improve.

Kathy Hardy said the website could be improved. It's not easy for volunteers to tell where and how they could be involved.

Marshall Havner said the website needs to be kept updated.

Leigh Marymor said the RAC has started a good discussion and asked if there is anything the RAC could do to encourage volunteers. He asked if there should be a line item in the budget for volunteers.

Bernadette Lovato said Bishop has segregated some money and got a grant to help pay for the Chalfant cleanup. The East Sierra 4-by-4 Club was involved.

Marshall Havner suggested BLM train a few volunteers and use them to lead the volunteer projects.

Reb Monaco said there needs to be an ongoing funding stream. Leigh Marymor said there needs to be a commitment from the top.

Tim Smith said there isn't a volunteer budget now, but BLM gets money from various sources such as challenge cost share. He would prefer not to be limited by having funds specified for volunteers.

Jim Haagen-Smit suggested BLM bring in volunteers such as retired executives who could do the higher level organizational work.

Tim Smith said the Public Lands Foundation, made up of BLM retirees, offers some assistance and some retirees such as Bob Reiner help out individually.

Walt Pachucki said since he and Carl Twisselman started on the RAC in 1995 there are new managers and projects. The entrepreneur spirit of the managers has helped projects succeed. There needs to be a minimum of bureaucracy for the volunteer programs. Some suggestions could create roadblocks.

Steve Koretoff said there should be a single point of contact in BLM offices for people to find out about volunteering.

Tim Smith said BLM Bakersfield has Ken Hock handling the administrative work as the volunteer coordinator. If someone is interested, he will put them in touch with the correct BLM staff.

Reb Monaco said he volunteers himself and volunteers typically start with an organization like OHV users or rockhounds, not the agency. BLM needs to be aware of who's using the public lands and encourage them to volunteer.

Bernadette Lovato said BLM Bishop does work with some user groups on volunteer projects.

Bill Haigh said areas like Pine Hill Preserve and Carrizo River Preserve draw people in. In other areas, BLM partners with user groups on projects.

ACTION: Volunteering will be kept as standing agenda items.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Amy Granat read a statement regarding Clear Creek from Ed Tobin and provided handouts (ATTACHED). She said there are a number of inconsistencies. Air samples were taken for years during events, but BLM isn't sure where they are. There are many unanswered questions and the OHV community deserves answers.

Reb Monaco said the San Benito County Supervisors voted to reopen roads through Clear Creek. The county will not maintain the road and will install signs warning of possible health risk. The supervisors also voted to support Alternative A in the RMP based on legal ramifications for the county. The county now has a clearly defined position on Clear Creek.

Amy Granat said there is poor documentation in the draft RMP and the RMP should be rewritten.

Roger Mitchell asked about a reference by Ed Tobin that BLM had been working on roads.

George Hill said BLM is not working on county roads. Ed Tobin may have been referring to trails that are being returned to their natural state under the present RMP. Marshall Havner asked if there would be future OHV use at Clear Creek.

George Hill said public use of Clear Creek inside the Area of Critical Environmental Concern will probably be limited.

Mike Damaso said motorcycles have been using Clear Creek since the 1960s. His father used the area and lived to be 94. There is no reason to close the area due to asbestos. If it did cause health problems, effects would show up in wildlife.

Roger Mitchell asked if exposure to asbestos by BLM employees is limited.

Kathy Hardy said there are exposure limits and lifetime health monitoring.

Roger Mitchell asked if there are health records on employees who worked in the asbestos mines.

Kathy Hardy said she had discussed that with the Environmental Protection Agency and it is hard to get health records.

Jim Haagen-Smit asked when the last asbestos mine closed.

George Hill said the Atlas Mine officially closed in 2002, but operations closed in the early 1990s.

Marshall Havner said his family had been going to Clear Creek for a long time and had no health issues.

Carl Twisselman said he hasn't seen any scientific studies regarding Clear Creek he has confidence in. His impression is asbestos is being used as a tool to get motorcycles out of Clear Creek. He thinks there is bias and EPA wrote the report with an end in mind. He doesn't like the way the process has taken place, but doesn't have enough information to support a resolution by the RAC.

Marshall Havner asked why grazing is allowed in the area. He said the trail rehab work being done says something about plans for the area.

Walt Pachucki said Clear Creek has been on the radar screen for 15 years. He works in mining and has an understanding of the science, but hasn't seen any reason to take a strong stand. BLM is facing a management dilemma with conflicting information. The initial focus was protecting T&E plant species from OHV use.

Paul McFarland said he has been confused about the amount of money invested in Clear Creek to try to make the area work. During a tour he saw areas where users wouldn't stay on the trail. BLM has been trying to keep Clear Creek open in the face of those who want it closed. Keeping Clear Creek open is untenable. The courts will make the final decision on Clear Creek. Clear Creek will always be a flash point if left open with conflicting issues of health risk, habitat and recreation. Additional areas for OHV use other than Clear Creek need to be found.

Marshall Havner asked if there have been any discussion with other groups on alternate areas.

Reb Monaco said there have been ongoing discussions through the RAC OHV Subcommittee. In addition to health risk, there are economic issues surrounding Clear Creek. Businesses have reported significant declines since the closure. Alternative E will not help the economy and leaves open the question of what to do with the public lands. There aren't epidemiological studies showing health effects and industrial exposure is different from exposure to recreational users from natural deposits. There isn't adequate scientific evidence to justify closing the area. On balance, the county decided the evidence supported a vote to keep the area open.

Amy Granat said there was a partnership with BLM and OHV users before the closure. If it reopens, the OHV community would be more active in educating users and enforcing rules. Alternative E allows some uses, but not OHV use. The OHV community feels it is unfairly targeted and there is not a clear explanation in the draft RMP. EPA found no evidence of a cancer cluster in El Dorado Hills that warranted further investigation and asbestos readings there were higher than Clear Creek.

Jim Haagen-Smit said it appeared there are two issues: T&E species and human health risk.

George Hill said there were problems before 2002 with route proliferation and BLM went through a route designation process. By 2008 there was a high degree of compliance and it wasn't a driving force in the closure decision.

Mike Damaso said there were about 1,000 miles of trail in Clear Creek in the 1960s and 70s. The route designations restricted use to the ACEC and caused the area to be over used. Additional areas need to be designated for OHV use because available areas have been reduced so open areas are being over used. In the Sierras, Red Hills and Dogtown have been closed so rides are creating illegal trails because there is nowhere else to go.

Steve Koretoff said he has been involved in Clear Creek since 1995. There was trespass into sensitive areas, but that has changed since 2002. The damaged fence that was seen on a RAC tour was repaired by 35 volunteers who also hauled out two loads of trash. The Salinas Ramblers and the Timekeepers OHV clubs have expended a lot of effort and used peer pressure to get riders to stay on routes and otherwise follow the rules.

Six hundred miles of trails in Clear Creek were reduced to 247, but there still was a lot of volunteer effort.

The Hollister Field Office is faced with a difficult task at Clear Creek. Risk is a complex issue and he sees fatal flaws in the draft plan. The EPA risk analysis give the underpinning for the EIS, but EPA has not been forthcoming with information that a Freedom of Information Act response from BLM indicates EPA has. One of the causes of the animosity by OHV users is EPA refuses to share its risk analysis with the public for peer review. Others can't duplicate EPAs risk report reviews and there needs to be peer review. Union Carbide tracks the health of 400 employees who worked at the Atlas Mine and there is no evidence of health risk. Based on the physical evidence and lack of answers from EPA, the public isn't convinced there is a risk.

Forty-four California counties have naturally occurring asbestos, so Clear Creek could set a precedent that with broad ramifications. Ten percent of the California education budget is spent on asbestos mitigation. Asbestos is being removed when a safer practice would be to seal it with epoxy. Ambient air samples in San Francisco exceed Clear Creek and EPA toxicologist Arnold Den told Steve Koretoff that's his next project.

The OHV community wants a resolution from the RAC supporting re-opening Clear Creek, expressing serious concerns about the draft plan and requesting no work be done on the staging areas or other facilities until the public process is completed.

He received calls from OHV users that staging areas were being removed. He wasn't aware that the EA was signed and got blindsided. He learned of BLM action from other parties and needs to be kept in the loop as the OHV representative on the RAC. He would like to see work on the staging areas cease until the plan is released and the administrative appeals are done. A vault toilet was removed.

George Hill said the toilet was in primrose habitat. When it was installed EPA hadn't announced it would do a study.

Marshall Havner said he believes BLM is doing a good job, but its hands are tied. He read the rockhounds' code of ethics.

Mike Damaso said there are no OHV areas in the Mother Lode Field Office under the Sierra RMP. The Forest Service also has closed roads, which has led to trespass. OHV users have lost respect for agencies. Land has been taken and there is no way to fight back. Individuals should be able to make their own decision on riding in Clear Creek.

MANAGERS UPDATES

Mother Lode

Bill Haigh said BLM added a 695-acre purchase to the Pine Hill Preserve about a month ago. It was a cooperative effort by BLM, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the American River Conservancy. The Kanaka Valley is a low-elevation wet meadow system that naturally stores rain water and moderates the release of seasonal flood waters to Folsom Reservoir.

The South Fork American River trail from Cronan Ranch to Salmon Falls should be open to the public in late summer. The American River Conservancy is working to acquire three small parcels to complete the trail.

BLM also may acquire the 300-acre Wakamatsu Colony a silk and tea farm dating back to 1869. Approximately two-thirds of the funds needed to purchase the property and establish an endowment for management have been raised from non-federal sources. BLM currently maintains the Chinese cemetery in Folsom that dates back to the Gold Rush.

Of the \$3 million the Mother Lode Field Office is receiving in ARRA funding, \$2.5 million is going toward mine remediation. About \$500,000 is being used to seal openings to remove physical hazards. The office typically seals eight or nine annually, but will seal 47 using the additional funding.

The remaining \$2 million will be used to address contamination from mercury used in the mining process. No one to date has successfully cleaned up mercury in a large area with multiple owners. Small pilot projects are being developed to use as a model for larger projects.

The Dogtown/Date Flat area was closed to OHV use in the Sierra RMP issued two years ago. BLM will start gradually implementing the closure in coming months. There are no loop trails and there have been complaints from neighbors. The area is hard to manage and overall has enough issues that it isn't feasible to manage it for OHV use.

Areas for wildland motorcycle use are being reduced. BLM is willing to work with users if there is an area with some BLM land that is defensible and meets the needs of users.

The Sierra foothills are second only to San Diego County for fire risk with 103 communities at risk. BLM has many scattered parcels in the wildland-urban interface. Jerry Martinez, the fire management officer, has AmeriCorps crews doing fuels reduction in Pine Hill Preserve and other areas. BLM is working with other agencies in the Calaveras Concensus to reduce fuels and encourage economic development in Calaveras County.

Hollister

George Hill said Hollister received \$4.5 million in ARRA funds. Of that, \$2 million will be administered by the Federal Highway Administration for road projects. BLM has hired six temporary employees, as well as contractors.

The Clear Creek decontamination facility is needed regardless of the area's status. BLM employees work in the area on projects from T&E species to abandoned mine lands and OSHA requires a decontamination facility next to the site.

Steve Koretoff asked who would use Oak Flat campground if Clear Creek is closed.

George Hill said there is a lot of demand for camping in isolated areas regardless of OHV use. Two-thirds of the staging area projects are work at Oak Flat and Jade Mill campgrounds.

Steve Koretoff said it is puzzling that BLM would spend money on campgrounds at the edge of the ACEC. He asked what the annual operating budget will be for the decontamination facility.

George Hill said the annual operating cost is estimated at \$20,000. Condon Peak is also adjacent to the ACEC, but is a popular spot for hiking.

Steve Koretoff said he has concerns about who would use the campgrounds. He said BLM should make areas outside the ACEC available for motorized recreation.

George Hill said there are some potential opportunities for motorized recreation at Condon Peak and hunter access using ATVs at Cantua.

BLM received a \$277,000 grant to buy three sections of land in the Tumey Hills from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for T&E species habitat. BLM purchased four sections of land in the area a few years ago from Reclamation and wanted to purchase some additional land in the area. Hollister also received some funding for California Coastal National Monument gateway programs in Santa Cruz and Monterey counties.

The group Save Our Agricultural Lands has filed a lawsuit against the Trust for Public Lands and Santa Cruz counties regarding Coast Dairies.

Hollister is looking at acquiring parcels near the Clear Creek staging areas with the goal of delisting some T&E species.

Hollister has received approval to sell some scattered tracts and buy property of higher value to BLM. Direct sales have been approved to Santa Clara Open Space and Monterey Open Space.

Bishop

Bernadette Lovato said problems have developed at Chalfant with users of public lands going through private property. BLM has been working with a Chalfant community group on the issue

and have developed a concept to better manage the area. One route will be closed and others moved further away from homes. Some trails will be designated for motorized use and others for hikers and equestrians.

Bishop received \$200,000 for ARRA projects. Projects will restore crucial habitat for sage grouse, remove invasive species and fence aspens and riparian habitat.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service ruled the sage grouse warrants listing as a T&E species but listing is precluded due to other species that have high priority. Key populations of sage-grouse managed by BLM are in Inyo and Mono counties. The Inyo and Mono population has been identified as genetically distinct. Populations here have been the focus of management since the development of the Bishop RMP in 1993 and are relatively stable. Agencies are working on a habitat management agreement to avoid future listing.

Carl Twisselman asked about the Cougar Gold exploration in the Bodie Hills.

Bernadette Lovato said Cougar drilled exploratory holes at 11 sites and hasn't been in further contact.

Paul McFarland asked about wind energy projects.

Bernadette Lovato said projects initially were proposed at eight locations. Due to sage grouse habitat and other concerns, that number has dropped to one location. A second company is in discussion with the Forest Service about a possible site. The approval process for any project will include public participation. There will be a field trip in the next month. Companies involved are E-Wind and Podoma.

Bakersfield

Tim Smith said the Monument Advisory Committee played a key role in development of the Resource Management Plan for the Carrizo Plain National Monument (SUMMARY SHEET ATTACHED). The Record of Decision will be signed April 10.

BLM received three protests, one from grazing permittees Bidart Brothers and two from environmental organizations. All were dismissed. There is a 30-day protest period following the publication of the Federal Register Notice on April 12.

Scoping was completed for the Bakersfield RMP (SUMMARY ATTACHED) before work slowed due to the Carrizo RMP. The chapter on environmental consequences should be completed in May and the draft RMP released in September or October. Three areas will receive additional emphasis – Keyesville, the San Joaquin River Gorge and the east side of the Temblors. Two rivers may be determined suitable as wild and scenic – the North Fork Kaweah

and upper San Joaquin River Gorge. The latter may be controversial as the site of the proposed Temperance Flat Dam.

BLM is proposing user fees for the San Joaquin River Gorge (ATTACHED). Reclamation has been providing most of the funding and money is needed in addition to appropriations. There will be public meetings on the fee proposal and it will then be presented to the Recreation RAC.

Tim Smith provided an update on ARRA projects:

Carrizo Plain National Monument Projects:

- Carrizo Restoration Project (\$200,000):
 - 14,000 native grass plugs have been purchased and planted throughout the Monument with the assistance of children and volunteers
 - Currently we have seed collectors out in the Monument collecting native seeds for additional restoration efforts
 - A contract is pending to fence off oak trees in the southern end of the Monument for protection. A pre-bid meeting has been completed and bids are being submitted to the California State Office
- Selby Road Improvement (\$311,000):
 - A contract has been awarded and work will begin in mid April to re-surface the Selby Road and to fix trouble spots
- Selby Ranch Demolition (\$150,000):
 - A contract has been awarded and work is expected to begin mid to late April. The work will include clean-up and removal of derelict buildings and associated debris at the Selby House on the southern side of the Caliente Mountains located in the Cuyama Valley

Piedras Blancas Outstanding Natural Area Projects:

- Piedras Blancas Fuel Storage Building Rehab (\$50,000):
 - Field Office has completed purchase request and waiting for California State Office to advertise project
 - Project would restore roof and stabilize structure to one of the first rebar reinforced structures on this portion of the Central Coast. Building sits adjacent to the Fog Signal Building
- Piedras Blancas Navy Building and Boat House Demolition (\$200,000):
 - Field Office has completed purchase request and waiting for California State Office to advertise project

- The project would completely demolish and remove the “Cold War” era Navy Building and 1970’s era Boat House which are currently being used for Administrative purposes
- Upon completion of the demolition, the landscape would be fully restored and brought back to the historic landscape

Other Bakersfield Field Office Projects:

- Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (\$50,000)
 - Agreements are in place with the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA) and the Student Conservation Association (SCA). The PCTA will perform trail condition assessments on the trail starting May through September. After September maintenance will be prioritized and conducted by SCA crews.
- Kiavah Wilderness, Secure Boundaries from OHV Activity (\$50,000):
 - Contract bid process started (ends April 19th) for fencing most frequently used illegal OHV access points. Conducting site visits with three contractors week of April 12. Other aspects of the project (signs, road restoration, etc.) will be underway once the fencing is completed.

Total number of Bakersfield Field Office Projects: 7

Total dollars reinvested in the Bakersfield Field Office: \$1,011,000

Law enforcement officers from agencies including BLM conducted a joint operation in eastern Kern County to address problems with OHV users who were using the Pacific Crest trail for access and trespassing onto private property.

Jim Haagen-Smit said problems will occur with any group, not just OHV users, and there needs to be some law enforcement.

CLEAR CREEK MANAGEMENT AREA

Leigh Marymor he sees the eventual outcome as BLM will make a decision based on the EPA report and the decision will be adjudicated in court.

George Hill said there have been concerns about asbestos since the 1970s. A study was conducted in 1992 as part of an RMP amendment. The results were borderline and didn’t show a need to take action, so an educational program on health risk was started. BLM didn’t expect the results of the 2008 study to be as bad as they were.

Carl Twisselman asked if OHV activity could be moved to the north side out of the ACEC.

George Hill said the State Parks OHV Division looked at the area for a possible OHV area and dropped the idea after they found serpentine in the Big Blue Hills. El Dorado Hills has less than 1 percent asbestos in the soil, while Clear Creek has more than 40 percent. Cow Mountain in the Ukiah Field Office also has a lower percentage.

Steve Koretoff ask the RAC to review the information. There are gaping holes in the analysis and other parties can't reproduce EPA's results. The closure was based on a flawed analysis. An independent third party should review the analysis. If the issue goes to court it could take years and be expensive. An independent review might be cheaper and faster.

George Hill said an independent lab counted the fibers in the samples. The EPA just used their data.

Steve Koretoff said EPA should release its base data. There are questions about the design of the sampling and why some filters were discarded.

Walt Pachucki said it is standard protocol for a lab to discard a plugged filter.

George Hill said CH2M Hill designed the study and used experienced federal employees to gather the samples. The samples were submitted to a certified lab.

ACTION: George Hill said he would check with EPA about releasing the fiber count data. He said the state OHV Division would be doing third-party sampling, possibly in mid-April.

Jim Haagen-Smit asked if there would be a third-party observer for that sampling.

Reb Monaco moved and Steve Koretoff seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 4:45 p.m.